

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Currently Amended) A surgical instrument for tissue fixation comprising:
a handpiece constructed to be held by a surgeon during a fixation procedure;
a cannulated tube defining a lumen, mounted on the handpiece, the cannulated tube including a tip portion configured to releasably receive and carry a rigid suture carrying device within the lumen at the tip portion and position the suture carrying device in a tissue opening;
and
a heating device, disposed within the cannulated tube.

30-49. (Cancelled)

50. (Currently Amended) A method of securing soft tissue to bone comprising:
coupling a suture to the soft tissue so that a portion of the suture extends from the soft tissue;
forming an opening in the bone;
mounting the extending portion of the suture on a suture carrying device;
sliding the suture carrying device along the extending portion of the suture until inserting
the suture carrying device is positioned in ~~into~~ the opening;
delivering a flowable material, in a liquid state, to the opening; and

allowing the flowable material to at least partially solidify to secure the suture and suture carrying device in the opening.

51-61. (Cancelled)

62. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 29, wherein the tip portion includes a keying feature configured to restrict rotation of the suture carrying device within the tip.

63. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 29 wherein the tip portion includes depressions in an outer surface of the tip portion, the depressions being configured to receive a suture carried by the suture carrying device.

64. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 29 wherein the heating device comprises a flexible circuit.

65. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 29 wherein the heating device comprises a thermistor.

66. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 64 wherein the heating device comprises a thermally conductive tube along which the flexible circuit is positioned.

67. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 29 wherein the cannulated tube comprises an insulating tube surrounding said heating device.

68. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 29 wherein the heating device comprises a pair of thermistors disposed in series.

69. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 68 further comprising electronics configured to compare signals received from the thermistors and to shut off power to the heating device if a predetermined difference between the signals is exceeded.

70. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 29 wherein the surgical instrument further comprises the suture carrying device.

71. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 70 wherein the suture carrying device comprises an eyelet or a groove configured to receive a portion of a suture.

72. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 70 wherein the suture carrying device is generally cylindrical and comprises one or more circumferential ridges.

73. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 70 wherein the suture carrying device includes a pair of wings extending radially from a distal end of the suture carrying device.

74. (New) The method of claim 70 wherein the suture carrying device is formed of a non-metallic material.

75. (New) The method of claim 74 wherein the suture carrying device comprises a resorbable polymer.

76. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the suture carrying device includes an eyelet, and the mounting step includes threading the suture through the eyelet.

77. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the suture carrying device includes a groove at a distal end of the suture carrying device, and the mounting step includes seating the suture in the groove.

78. (New) The method of claim 50 further comprising seating the suture carrying device in the opening.

79. (New) The method of claim 50 further comprising, between the inserting and delivering steps, tensioning the suture.

80. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein the tensioning step comprises manually tensioning the suture.

81. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the inserting step comprises mounting the suture carrying device at an end of a cannulated tube, and inserting the tube into the opening.

82. (New) The method of claim 50 further comprising providing the flowable material in a non-liquid state and heating the material to cause it to flow.